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241 work, and whose relations also assist him in this work as messengers and the like.

464 The labourers are all young men, mostly the sons of farmers, but occasionally also sons of impoverished *bourgeois* families (one of the labourers on my list was the son of a Mallam, another the son of a Bida *saraki*). Some labourers come from far away to the place where they expect to find employment: thus I found a young man from Lapai working in Jebba, and one from Bida working in Ilorin. Their working day is from early morning till about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, that is, the normal working day of the *efakó* worker. They get 2*d.* or 3*d.* a day and food; they work mostly for from four to ten days, some for a longer period, till they have collected a substantial sum of money. In no case has wage-labour in Nupe become a permanent, exclusive occupation. These young men seek only temporary employment and return after or in between their engagements to the family farm, where they carry on with the ordinary work of the season. Even a temporary absence of this kind may, of course, render the management of the family farm difficult and even precarious. For instance, the labourer from Lapai whom I have just mentioned, was working in Jebba as late as June, and could not return home before July when all the early planting and weeding would be completed. However, the need of money seems to outweigh all other objections. The main motive in undertaking wage-labour is invariably to obtain money for tax—either for oneself or as contribution to the parental household; next in importance is the motive to obtain money for bride-price.

It must be said in conclusion that though wage-labour represents a comparatively recent growth in Nupe society, the situation which created the need of wage-labour is not. Nor is the system of employed, i.e. non-family, labour the product of a recent development. Part of the social stratification of Nupe was, as we have seen, the creation of an upper class which owned land but did not work it. The labour which this class had to employ was of three kinds: slave labour, the labour of pawns, and, to a lesser extent, of clients. The first and the last kind of employed labour, both involving a social and political significance far beyond the aspect of labour, we have discussed already in a previous section. The second kind—labour of pawns—we will discuss later when analysing the concept of wealth.

DIVISION OF LABOUR BETWEEN THE SEXES (I)

462 The role which the women play in the agricultural production of the country lends itself to a simple formula. With very few exceptions the women do not perform any primary productive activity: they do no farm-work; they do not help in cultivation except occasionally when assisting the men in the harvesting of cotton or beans or the digging out of cassava—the easiest crop of all. Their sphere of work is, first, the 'refining' of agricultural produce to make it marketable, and secondly, the marketing itself. If the general formula is simple, the details of the division between 'primary' and 'secondary' productive activities, one

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assigned to the men and the other to the women, are involved and intricate. We will discuss them here only in so far as they refer to the household arrangements and leave the discussion of marketing proper for later.

The most elementary 'refining' process in this respect is the cooking for the household. In our general description we have reached the point when the various crops from the family farm have been harvested and stored. From these stores the family head will hand out regularly a certain amount to the wives for cooking. The arrangement varies with different crops: grain and beans, for example, are dispensed by the family head as a rule once a week or once in ten days; yams are brought in from the farm (where they are stored) about twice or three times a week, in the case of a family of three or four adults four to six yams each time, i.e. a supply sufficient for from two to three days; rice, the most expensive of all foodstuffs, is handed out only for the day when it is needed for cooking. The women plan the meals, but the men being in charge of the stores always know beforehand what they are going to have; occasionally they even order the 'menu' for the day. The amount of food which the men allow for cooking is adjusted to the exact requirements: for example, if the men are having their midday meal on the farm, where they cook their own yam or cassava, they will hand out a proportionately smaller supply of yams, two or three, for the house, which must last for three days. In the town and among non-farmers the family head gives his wife or wives money for buying the necessary food about once in a week or ten days. The family head, however, does not provide for all meals, nor for every foodstuff needed in the household. He contributes food only for the main meals, midday and evening meal, and then only the bulk of the meal: grain, yams, rice, fish, and meat. Of other ingredients such as pepper, okra, or certain greens, he provides only those which he has grown himself. Other even most essential ingredients the wife must invariably procure herself—even though they may have been obtained from trees growing on the land of the husband—namely, *kula* (made of locust-bean), *kuha* (made of the leaves of the baobab tree), palm-oil, shea-butter, and also salt. These things the wife has to buy in the market with her own money. Unless food has been left over from the night before, the morning meal consists mostly of corn-water or gruel, sometimes eaten with ground-nut or bean pastries, and is made of foodstuffs invariably supplied by the women. They will share the morning meal with their husbands, but will only sell it to the other members of the household, even including the children, for whose meal their father has to pay. Pastries and savouries are always made of foodstuffs which the women have to buy with their own money. They are then sold, and with considerable profit, in the markets or streets, except the titbits which a mother will always put aside for her children. If the husband feels he would like one of these delicacies he has to buy it, either from his wife or some other woman pastry-cook.

The Nupe women have also other, more important, sources of income which more than balance the financial obligations which they have to undertake in the household arrangement. The services of the women

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462 592 443 are indispensable, and are accordingly rewarded in the disposal of crops intended for marketing. There are various methods in the disposal of crops. One is the following: the family head hands the produce he intends to sell over to his wife, either the whole produce at once, immediately after the harvest, or small quantities at different times, according to whether he is in need of ready money or can wait for a better price later in the year. His wife will then sell the produce in the market and return the money she received for it to the husband. He gives her a little of this money, half as present, half as commission. His gift varies with the price which she has managed to obtain, and will express his appreciation of her more or less clever marketing. The woman may, of course, have to try a good many different markets if she wants to obtain the best price; and the men may not always be in a position to check the price which their wives quote to them after the sale. My information is that the women do not hesitate to take advantage of this lack of control; but the men, it seems, are as well aware of this and regard it as a legitimate way of making money. Another method, possible only if the women have sufficient money in hand, is this: the family head sells the whole produce directly to his wife after the harvest. She pays for it, stores the produce in her own granaries, and sells it later in the year when prices have gone up, possibly in small quantities at a time to obtain the best price. This method is as a rule applied in the disposal of palm-kernels and the fruits of the locust-bean tree. Another method in the disposal of crops does not enlist the help of the women of the house—although it may have to enlist the help of other women in the person of the traders. It is limited to a few kinds of produce only: rice, kola-nuts, and also palm-kernels in case one's own wife is not an expert in oil-making; these goods are sold by the family head directly to professional traders.

462 592 422 So far the role of the Nupe woman—more precisely the wife of the Nupe farmer—is that of a 'broker' and 'middleman'. In the disposal of the produce of certain fruit-bearing trees, however, the women are assigned direct and absolute property rights. The fruit of the locust-bean so far as it has to be plucked from the tree is disposed of in the way described above; but the fallen fruits of that tree belong entirely to the women of the house. They can do with them what they like, and the money which they obtain from the sale of the raw as well as the 'refined' produce belongs to them. Also, the whole produce of the shea-nut tree belongs to the women. The exploitation of the shea-nut tree, the fruit of which is of comparatively high commercial value, is regarded as a definite monopoly of the Nupe women, and as representing a direct compensation for their contribution to the expenses of the household.

462 476 461 533 The picking of the fruit of the shea-nut tree by small groups of women also furnishes an example of a co-operative organization among the women beyond the single household or family, somewhat similar to the system of collective labour organized by the men. There exists another form of collective female labour which is regarded by the people themselves as the exact counterpart to the men's *egbe*. As the men, in *egbe* work, build or repair houses and roofs, the women's collective work is

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employed in the beating of the floors of the huts or the platforms in front and between the huts. This work is done in the evenings, when the women have finished their own housework. It has all the elements of the *egbe*: the generous meal awaiting the workers, the singing and dancing—the beating itself is done rhythmically, to the accompaniment of songs (no musical instruments are employed in this or in any of the women's dances), and in its movements the motions of work and dance are attractively combined. The group of women fills the hut to overflowing. They are arranged in concentric circles, pressing closely against each other. Bent low over the floor they beat the ground three times with the heavy wooden flail which they hold in their right hand, then pull themselves up, lift both hands in the air, and take a measured dance step towards the centre and back again, and then bend down once more to resume the beating of the floor. Or they fill this rhythmical pause in the work with the verse of some interminable song, and while singing they move a few steps along in the circle; when the moving ring comes to a halt they bend down to their work, to interrupt it once more in the rhythmical motion of this 'ring-dance'. Nor is the incentive of competition absent in this *egbe* of the women. House-groups compete with house-groups; girls of different age are assigned different tasks: small girls of 6–7 are working slowly and silently on the outskirts of the group; girls of 12 or so are singing with the women and work towards the inside, trying to emulate the speed and ease of the grown-ups; and the adult women, leading in dance and work, spur their teams to almost breathless speed. As they work and dance, closely packed into the small dark hut, stripped to the waist, their bodies glistening with sweat and spattered with mud, beating, singing, stamping, and shouting, they seem to be actors in some exciting savage ritual rather than in ordinary work.

To return to the more prosaic aspects of the division of labour between the sexes, and to the question of the 'compensation' for her contributions to the household which the exploitation of shea-nut trees allows the Nupe woman. The clearly defined attitude of the people with regard to this question of 'compensation' and the economic rights of the women in general is illustrated in the following example. We remember that the roast-ovens in which the shea-nuts are dried before being marketed or manufactured into shea-butter are built by the men. Now, in Leaba I found that the women had to dry shea-nuts in the sun, a much slower and more laborious procedure, as all their ovens were dilapidated and sadly in need of repair. I inquired why the men did not build new ones. The men explained they had no time and money. I suggested, half jokingly, that the men might be given a share in the profits made on the shea-nuts and in return repair the roast-ovens. Whereupon the women, realizing that their own special interests were involved, joined in the discussion, which is interesting enough to be given here word for word.

Women: 'Why should we give the men part of our money? Do we not cook porridge for them?'

I: 'But he gives you the grain for making the porridge.'

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Women: 'Yes, but *only* the grain. We have to contribute *kula*, *kuka*, salt, pepper and palm-oil.'

I: 'Surely you have locust-bean trees and red pepper in Leaba?'

Women: 'No, there are no locust-bean trees here, nor pepper.'

One woman: 'This is not true, we have pepper.'

Another woman (rather defiantly): 'Well, there still remains salt, *kula*, and palm-oil for which we, the women, have to pay.'[1]

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[1] Another example of the clearly defined economic rights of the women is this: in the Nupe communities in the forest groves on the Niger, where there are no shea-nut trees, the banana is the property of the women and supplies them with fruits which they can dispose of in their own right.

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DIVISION OF LABOUR BETWEEN THE SEXES (II)

In none of the industrial activities described on the preceding pages women take any part, except, indirectly, in weaving. But there exist also certain special women's crafts—again, 'individual' crafts—the technique of which is known only to the women and the proceeds from which are women's property. We may note that the men are much more ignorant about women's crafts than they are about the special activities of the women in connexion with agriculture and housework, i.e. cooking, palm-oil manufacture, and so forth. I could always obtain very reliable information on cooking or shea-butter and palm-oil manufacture from men; but information obtained from men on, say, pottery, proved superficial and misleading. Often, in fact, the men refer you to the women rather than venture any information themselves. Woman's craftwork is thus much more specifically and exclusively a woman's concern. It is also more self-contained than cooking and similar activities, being hardly connected with the productive activities of the men. This is most clearly shown by the fact that in craftwork the women must produce their own means of production, unlike, for example, in shea-nut manufacture, in which the women use roast-ovens built by the men, and that, for this purpose, the women have evolved special forms of comparatively large-scale co-operation. At the same time women's crafts are much less widespread than women's other activities. The three crafts peculiar to women, indigo dyeing, pottery, and weaving (a special type of weaving), occur only in certain localities and social groups; there are large numbers of women in Nupe who do not practise any handicraft.

We have seen already that indigo dyeing by women is practised only in the few *konú* groups in Nupe country, where the men are the weavers and the women the dyers (see p. 235). The women's craftwork goes beyond this partnership; the women dye not only the cotton-thread which is used later by the men in weaving, but also any kind of ready-made cloth, old and new, that is brought to them by outside customers. For this work they charge 2*d.* to 3*d.* per cloth. Dyeing is done individually, every woman having her own dyeing-pot and making her own dye. But the women of one household often help each other in this work. Among the women dyers in Kutigi and Sakpe we even find a co-operation which goes beyond the single household. The pots in which the dyeing is done are arranged on a platform outside the compound or part of the village in which the dyers live. When building this platform and putting up the dye-pots all the women of the locality work together—it has been said already that the building and beating of platforms is women's work; the dyeing 'platform' itself thus represents a close analogy to the large work-shed in which the weavers work. This co-operation among the *konú* women does not represent a specific and, as it were, additional productive organization, for it takes place within the existing framework of a closely integrated kindred, formed by these craftsmen and women of alien tribal origin. But here the interesting sociological question arises how this limitation of a woman's craft to a local and kinship group is achieved and

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maintained in a patrilineal and patrilocal society. The explanation is supplied by the endogamous organization of the *konú* groups, which marry mostly into other *konú* families of the same or a neighbouring village. In one or two cases in which intermarriage of a *konú* woman with a Nupe man has taken place, the wife took her craft with her and is practising it in her new home, but now as a completely individual craft, without the help and co-operation of her fellow craftswomen.

Pottery is widespread in Nupe, both in Bida and in the villages. Certain places are famous for their pottery, such as Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and also Bida. The best clay for pottery is found near the river, and this may explain the superiority of the pottery produced in these localities, which are all situated on or near the river. But there exists also a regular trade in potter's clay; women from Badeggi take the excellent clay which is found in that district to Bida and sell it there to the local potters. Other inland places, even rich, busy villages such as Kutigi and Mokwa, have no pottery at all. But Mokwa is only ten miles from Jebba, the great pottery centre, and Kutigi market, on the main trade-route to the west and south, is amply supplied with pots from everywhere. Facilities for trade and communication thus make for specialization, and tend to eliminate inferior local production—a point to which we shall return in another context.

In Bida, too, we find a certain specialization in pottery. Clay lamps and the small pitchers which the Mohammedans use for their ablutions are made everywhere in Bida. Other kinds of pots are made in one *efu* only (the *efu* of the *masagá*, which is situated close to the river). These are large, wide pots used for cooking; tall pots, shaped somewhat like a column, which are in reality three round pots placed on top of each other and formed into one large receptacle—Nupe men and women store their clothes in these pots, which are called *etso*; and small round platters which, broken into small pieces, are used for making tessellated floors. We note that the women are here producing the 'raw material' for another typical woman's work, the making of floors. The making of these pots and platters is generally recognized to be much more difficult and to involve more special training than the manufacture of clay lamps and pitchers. The secret of the technique—for it is, in Nupe eyes, a secret—is only possessed by the women in three compounds in the glass-workers' quarter.[1] Mothers teach their daughters this technique, and we are, again, faced with the question how to account for the limitation of a technique which is transmitted in the female line to a local group formed according to the rule of patrilocal residence. The answer is more or less the same as in the case of the women dyers. The women potters from the *masagá fu* mostly marry into families of the same or a neighbouring *efu*. The girls who occasionally marry into the *masagá* quarter from outside are instructed in the art of pottery by their mothers-in-law. The daughters of the women potters, however, who marry outside (I recorded

[1] This technique involves the use of a crude potter's wheel—the only known case in Africa. Of the different groups of women potters in Nupe only those in Bida and Badeggi use this device. For the description of the technique I must refer to a future publication.

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three cases) abandon the craft altogether. Pottery also involves a certain co-operation between the women which goes beyond the single household. The pots are made in the house, individually, but the burning of the pots takes place in an open space outside, and in this the women from different compounds work together, building the fire of grass and firewood and using it jointly for the burning of their pots. This co-operation neither expresses kinship and tribal unity, as in the case of the *konú* women dyers, nor is it based on an organized occupational union as in the case of the handicrafts of the men. Rather is it an occasional, free co-operation for the sake of expediency which is suggested by the particular technique of this handicraft.

The question of the limitation of a woman's craft to a particular section of the population reappears, with a different meaning, in weaving. The women's weaving is done on the upright broad loom (21 in. wide), which, though produced to-day by the Bida carpenters, appears to have had its origin in the south, in Yoruba country, where I have also seen it used as a woman's loom. This technique of weaving is said to be comparatively new, and not traditionally Nupe, and may indeed have come to Nupe from Yoruba in the times of the Yoruba wars, through the medium of Yoruba wives and slaves of the Nupe nobility. For women's weaving is restricted to the womenfolk of the upper classes of Nupe society; only wives and daughters of the nobility or the 'intelligentsia' possess a loom and practise the craft. There is, in fact, no house of the upper classes in which you will not find several of these looms being used by girls and women. Conversely, looms and craft are completely absent in the poorer man's home. The technique is handed on from mother to daughter. In very few cases only was I informed that a wife had been taught weaving by her mother-in-law. The profit involved in this work corresponds to the average profit of the men's handicrafts. One big embroidered cloth, 2 yards long, is sold for 10*s.* to 15*s.*, the material costing 5*s.*; the weaving takes thirty days (a cheaper, not embroidered, kind of cloth can be manufactured in half the time), and the profit per day is thus between 2*d.* and 3*d.* This gives us the explanation for the limitation of this craft to a specific social stratum. Only women who have servants (*bara* and formerly slaves) to help in the housework and to run errands for them can find the leisure for this long and delicate work. But the restriction of this woman's craft to one social stratum is only made possible through the existence of a unilateral endogamy—class endogamy—on the part of the women, who rarely marry beneath their station. If I am right, and these looms have been imported into Nupe from Yoruba, we have an interesting instance of class-restricted culture contact, that is, of cultural 'borrowing' which is at once fitted into, and made to subserve, the existing system of rigid social stratification.

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of time by their family and relations; and many will, or hope that they will, some day return to their home country.[1]

In this description I have dealt with professional and non-professional traders as if they represented sharply distinct classes. There is, in fact, good sense in speaking in Nupe of *cewoce* or *koragba*, 'trader', as against other professions. The line of division, however, is fluid. It is more fluid among women than among men. Among the men we can at least define the extremes: the big trader is nothing but a trader, and the cultivator or guild craftsman is never a trader. But trade on a small scale goes hand in hand with the individual crafts and 'free professions', and an occasional business deal is welcome to everybody. But here a further distinction is necessary. The Nupe distinguish between traders proper and brokers, *dilali*. The brokers have as a rule their booths on the market, and undertake to sell goods for their clients for a small commission. It is interesting to note that while the Nupe traders are 'free' professions in every respect, the brokers are organized in a guild-like organization. They elect a guild-head, the *Etsu* or *Sarkin Dilali*, who is confirmed by the king and keeps in close contact with the court. As soon as a new trade caravan arrives at the *zongu* (the traders' camp outside the gates of Bida) he will go and see the traders and inspect their goods. It is his duty also to inform the king of caravans and goods that have arrived. He must ascertain the king's wishes with respect to these goods before he allows them to be placed on the open market. Here, then, we find again the element of political control which is so closely associated with guild organization. The *Etsu Dilali*, placed in control over all Bida brokers, levies a small fee from them, in return for which he guarantees them equal access to the valuable and profitable goods which arrive in Bida from abroad. He, and through him the whole organization of brokers, thus guarantee to clients and fellow members an efficient marketing organization, the avoidance of unsound competition, and business integrity. The organization of brokers differs in certain respects essentially from the guild organization proper. It does not utilize the principles of kinship (real or fictitious); nor does it attempt in any other way to ensure the solidarity and continuity of the professional group. It represents a 'free' association of 'free' business men, coming very close to the principle of the modern professional union.

DIVISION OF LABOUR BETWEEN THE SEXES (III)

The market census given above has shown that marketing and trade, too, are subject to the rules regulating division of labour between men and women. We can formulate certain general rules: all food-stuffs and agricultural produce, and of native industrial products manufactured by men those that are typical women's articles, are traded by women. To the first category must also be counted the native stimulants, tobacco for

[1] These remarks refer to a typical Nupe traders' colony in Ibadan which I have studied at some length. An instance of a trading-colony which has sprung up quite suddenly is Agege, a village ten miles north of Lagos, which, in 1936, had been in existence for five years only.

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462 441 snuff and smoking, its modern counterpart, cigarettes, and kola-nuts, although they are used mostly by men. To the second category belong the various products of Nupe fashion industry, rings, bracelets, chains, ladles, glass-ware, beads, and also the low carved stools, made by the carpenters, on which the Nupe women are wont to sit. The products of women's crafts are traded by women, irrespective of their use: thus the women sell cloth woven by women (used chiefly for women's dresses), indigo dye (which may be used by and for the men), native soap and pots, including the pitchers which the men use for ablutions. All goods produced by men and used by men are marketed by male traders: hoes, axes, arms, gowns, straw hats, books, leather-work, &c. Goods used by both sexes are traded by both men and women: for example, mats, and certain kinds of cloth of native or European make. Live stock is always marketed by men, only chickens are sometimes sold on the market by women.

462 441 868 Throughout this description the term 'woman' means married women as well as girls, mothers and wives as well as daughters. Small girls of 6 or 8 will already 'keep shop' in play, sitting behind a basket in which they have arranged a few pebbles, little rags of cloth or cigarette tins filled with sand, and silently display their 'goods', as they have seen their mothers and elder sisters do. Mothers always take their young girls to the market, letting them sit beside them and, if they are big enough, carry some of the loads on the way there and back. Girls of 12 or 13 will assist their mothers or deputize for them when they are called away; or they will take some of the cooked food which the women sell, and walk through the market and adjoining streets, crying out the wares, while the mother remains sitting behind her basket. This is, incidentally, an interesting division of labour between mother and daughter, and old and young trader in general. For it is against the dignity of grown-up [576] women to cry out their wares—only young girls may do that. A girl of 14 or 16 is already fully initiated into the secrets of commerce, and will soon start to trade on her own, with a capital of a few pennies or a small store of grain or ground-nuts given her by her mother. By degrees the capital and the scope of her business will grow. I remember a court case in Bida in which two girls, between 14 and 15 years of age, had been summoned because they had fought on the market. The fight was about a piece of cloth which one girl had taken from the other, agreeing to buy it for a certain amount; but later she declared it to be too dear, and paid only half the agreed price. The price of the cloth was 6*d*., and the people in the court were very amused about this commercial transaction in (as the *Alkali* put it) 'little girl's rags'. However, 'little girl's rags' become real cloth, and even more valuable goods, in the course of time, and when the girl marries she is a fully fledged trader, and fully versed in the art of marketing which will be one of her duties as a married woman. Her [428 562] earnings remain her own property and cannot during her lifetime be touched by her husband. Only when she dies will the husband be entitled to inherit her property.

593 562 This brings us to the question of the economic inequality of husband and wife. It is implied in this division of labour between the sexes which

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593 562 makes the women the main traders of the country that the women can as a rule command more liquid capital than the men. In this sense, referring to the liquid resources, it can be said that the Nupe women are on the whole wealthier than the men. This does not mean that their financial position is entirely unaffected by the limited resources of the husband. The wives of small farmers and craftsmen or, generally, impecunious husbands, have little scope for their commercial activities, and may be unable to derive from the household resources the necessary working capital for a profitable independent enterprise. Where there is little to sell there can be little profit; and this small profit may be swallowed up by the normal household expenditure. Even the utensils and goods which constitute the wife's dowry may disappear gradually in a household where there is no money with which to replace the stock of pots, clothes, and ornaments—the woman's initial 'capital' (see p. 351). The household of a diviner in Bida, whom I knew well, was a typical case. The man was of poor health, unable to do any serious work, and had to rely entirely on his income from divining, which was small and irregular. The wife maintained the household, poor and simple as it was. She was about 40 years old; she had nothing left of her dowry save the few rags which she wore, and a few damaged pots. Every day she bought grain for 6*d.* on the market, made corn-gruel and corn-water, and sold this food in the mornings in the street, with a total profit of 2*d.* With this money she kept herself and her husband and a small child.

But usually the wives even of men whom one would hardly call prosperous attain an impressive degree of solvency. Solvency in this connexion is a relative term, as the pecuniary demands which the wives have to meet are much smaller than those which devolve on the men as the heads of the household. Yet in many cases the women come to the succour of their men even in expenses of the latter kind. It is by no means rare, especially in Bida, to find families in which a mother undertakes to pay the bride-price for the sons. Much more widespread is the practice of wives lending their husbands money, for example, for the payment of tax. Of this practice we shall hear more later. Let me emphasize here the dependence of the husband on his wife with regard to these monetary obligations—a dependence which must increase as the independent economic enterprise of the women, commerce, is increasing in scope. This fact is essential for the understanding of certain moral issues involved in the expansion of women's trade in Nupe.

441 462 562 I have stated earlier that the line of distinction between professional and occasional traders is much more fluid among the women than among the men. Wives of farmers, craftsmen, Mallams, noblemen, traders, officials—they all are, or may be, traders. The enormous variety in the trade which is carried out by the Nupe women, and in the degree of their 'professionalization', cannot be reduced to a simple formula. The woman who sells every morning two or three dozen packets of home-made *kamu* (corn-gruel) for a tenth of a penny each, and the woman who buys £5 worth of rice, kola-nuts, or European cloth, do not really differ in anything except in the amount of capital they can lay their hands on. The difference in the distance which they cover when

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disposing of their goods—the peasant woman who walks eight to ten miles to the nearest local market, and the professional woman trader who travels to Lokoja or Ilorin by canoe or train—may seem but an external feature. Yet this factor of distance possesses a deeper significance. The essential difference between the professional and the occasional woman trader is embodied in the extent to which their trading and marketing becomes an independent, self-contained, and self-centred enterprise. Both the occasional and the professional trader are out for profit. But only the latter has adjusted her life fully to this aim. 'Proper' trade necessitates a freedom of movement, a full-time devotion to the task, which only women who have made themselves independent can afford. It means extensive journeys, and long absence from home. Obviously, the wife of a farmer or craftsman who must look after the house is less able to do this than the wife of a trader or a man of the leisured classes.

But the profession demands even more than comparative leisure. The long absence from home, the life on the road, in foreign villages and countries to which none of the normal contacts of the community stretch, means ultimately a dissolution of the bonds of marriage, household, and family. The disappearance of all moral control of the husband over his wife, or the local community over its women, expresses itself in the sexual licence claimed by these women. Female trade and immorality are in Nupe conception two things closely related. The women traders who go on these long expeditions and stay away from home for weeks, months, or even years, are commonly regarded as 'loose' women, as women who cannot help leading a 'loose' and 'immoral' life. The women traders prostitute themselves for money in the villages and towns where they stop on their trading expeditions. The money which they make is regarded by the people as legitimate a form of earnings as that gained from trade itself. When they return to their homes husband and family will receive them without question, and no blame would attach to them for the life which they had been leading while away. Public opinion, though outspoken in its general condemnation of moral laxity, yet countenances the sexual licence of women traders and accepts it almost as an institution. If people—men, as the spokesmen of public opinion—express their indignation at this danger to matrimonial morality, they attack, not the practice itself, but its disproportionate growth in recent times.

We have, in a previous chapter, discussed the social significance of this qualified admission of sexual licence in a certain limited social domain (see Chap. IX). Let me recall the salient facts: female trade, closely associated as it is with licentious living, provided the scope for that socially condoned sexual licence which other social forces seem to have made necessary. Thus female trade became in some respects a closed profession, the entrance into which was made dependent on the qualification of sterility. We may add here that, not unnaturally, women who were past child-bearing age could also legitimately join the profession of women traders. By means of these two qualifications an occupation which harboured some danger to common morality was limited to

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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what were (to the society) the least dangerous groups. This limitation is no longer true. But the information which I collected on this point, from every part of the country, and every social stratum, leaves no doubt that the limitation did obtain, and that it is still regarded as the more adequate practice. Formerly, I was told, no peasant would have dreamed of letting his young wife go to distant markets the journey to which would involve spending the night on the road, away from home. Nor did women with children ever leave the home for these long expeditions to foreign parts. To-day, an ever-increasing number of Nupe women, young women and women with children, travel about the country, independent, and unrestricted by village morals. In the large trading-places in the south such as Baro, Lokoja, Ibadan, I have met many—they lived there, some with their children, as well-known traders and as equally well-known prostitutes.

We have learned that this development is due to a variety of social factors. We will discuss here the factors which are embodied in the economic changes, and which, in fact, appear to represent the main moving force. It is difficult to say for certain whether the floating population of wifeless men has considerably increased during the last generation. It seems to have done so. But speaking more generally, the rapid development of trade since the pacification of the country after the Fulani wars and specially after the British conquest cannot be doubted. It appears to have overtaken Nupe society unawares, as it were, without giving it the chance to readjust itself gradually to the new conditions. Trade, in the war-disturbed times of the past an occupation for men who could carry arms, fell now easily to the women. It called for new recruits, and seized upon the existing system of division of labour between the sexes—men as producers, and women as 'middlemen' and traders. Yet this organization, which was designed to fit into the narrow scope of village life, was adapted too readily to the purposes of the new widespread trade that developed in the Emirates. No other system of division of labour and specialization, it appears, could be evolved as quickly to take charge of the new tasks. It could not but disorganize social life. Family organization and the traditional concepts of morality fell victims to economic progress. The profit motive, here as in many other fields of Nupe economy, outstripped and overruled the interests of group cohesion and group stability.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

438 Plants important for trade and in native industry include cotton, henna (*lalí*), and hemp, both introduced from Hausa country, and gourds. The by-products of 241 agriculture, such as grain stalks, are used by the cultivator and his family for making fences, beds, and mats; sorghum stalks yield black and red vegetable dyes. Occasionally large non-fruit-bearing trees are cut down and sold to carpenters.[11]

Organization and Division of Labour

241 A two-fold principle of collective family work (*efakó*) and individual work 476 (*bucá*) applies to farm labour, and to its products, income, and granaries. Each male member of the household owns a *bucá* farm, while all work on the *efakó* farm, the produce of which is stored in the *efakó* granaries, the head controlling the disposal. Sometimes forms of productive labour other than farm work are organized according to the *efakó* system, e.g., indigo-dyeing at Mokwa.

All those who share in the *efakó* group work are housed, clothed, and fed, and have their tax and marriage payments met by the household head, who also supplies tools and pays for their repair. Personal requirements beyond this are paid for from the proceeds of the *bucá* work. The present tendency is for large *efakó* groups to disintegrate on the death of the household head, the members of the group demanding a larger measure of freedom than the *efakó* system provides.

Mutual assistance and large-scale collective labour is of two types: *egbe*, for *efakó* farm work (mainly tilling and weeding), and for work for the community as a whole, e.g., building or roofing of a chief's house, repair of a bush bridge or road or of a town wall or the N.A. rest-house, etc. *Egbe* farm work is, on the whole, performed by younger people, often members of one or more of the age-set associations; it is accompanied by drummers and musicians and concludes with a feast. Help is generally enlisted for tilling and for the first and second weeding, and *egbe* is performed first and on the largest scale on the chief's farm.

The second type of mutual assistance—*dzolo*—is less important. It is an arrangement among a number of farmers to work on each other's farms in turn, usually for the harvesting of groundnuts, cotton, and beans.

464 Wage labour (*kantsú*; Hausa, *lada*) plays an insignificant part in Nupe production. It is found only in large commercial centres, such as Kachia and Jebba, and in Bida for temporary employment only.

462 Women do practically no farm work, but they undertake the processing of agricultural produce for market and the actual marketing, and the exploitation of the shea-nut tree is entirely in the hands of women.[12]

Floor-beating is an important women's task and is made something of a ceremony. While the old women pour water on to it the young women beat the floor with wooden beaters wrapped in rugs in time to the rhythm of drums.[13]

Livestock

231 Cattle are of minor importance in Nupe economy. They are owned only by 422 butchers who buy from Bornu and Fulani traders. The cattle are of the northern humped breed and are not immune from trypanosomiasis. Sheep are rarely kept for breeding but are fattened and sold.

262 No pigs are kept and no pork is eaten.[14] Every household keeps chickens 492 which are bought and sold regularly in the food markets of all the larger villages. Eggs are not marketed and are eaten only rarely in Nupe country. Donkeys are 554 kept as transport animals. Horses (mainly in Bida) are a symbol of high rank and status.[15]

[11] Nadel, 1942, pp. 59, 230–7, 238, 205–14; Line, 1947: Temple 1919, p. 236.
[12] Nadel, 1942, pp. 241–58.
[13] Malam Aliyu Bida, notes, ed. P. G. Harris.
[14] Pigs were reported in Sharagi (Share) in 1918 and Pategi in 1912 (Notes by Biscoe and Budgen).
[15] Nadel, 1942, pp. 201–4.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

467 533 535 the villages drumming is mainly a side-line to farming. Drummers in Bida form small bands or companies, the origins of which, and the type of their performance, vary. Both men and women perform and women sing. Members of a single group may come from different families. There are no *efakó* arrangements. Such a band may be in a *bara* (client) relationship to a nobleman. The various bands or companies do not co-operate. The drums are made by wood-workers on the river.[30]

464 *Western crafts* are practised for wages in the workshops of the N.A. Public Works Dept. These craftsmen include blacksmiths, mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers. Temporary unskilled labour is employed mainly in occasional work demanding a large body of unskilled labour, such as construction work of various kinds. Most of these labourers go home and return to their permanent work at the end of their temporary employment. Those who are farmers seek temporary employment during the dry season only, to supplement the normal source of income.[31]

Women's crafts

323 462 *Pottery* is practised individually. Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and Bida are famous for their pottery and there is a regular trade in both potters' clay and pots. The main products are small water jugs and large water containers. Clay is prepared from swamps at Gbako River, at Badeggi, and sold by the villagers. It is tempered with powdered potsherd or brick. The building of the pots is individual work, but firing is undertaken collectively. Pots are simply fired, then given a brown wash or blackened with a concoction of shea-nut bark.

462 [252] *Shea-butter manufacture* is carried out by women, but the roasting ovens are built by men.

[386] *Indigo-dyeing* is practised only by a few *Konú* groups, where the men are weavers and the women dyers. The indigo-grass and the indigo-tree are cultivated by men, but where the indigo is picked and prepared from wild growing grass, the work is done by women. The dye-pot platforms are made by women; the dyeing is carried out individually. There are a few groups of male dyers (e.g., in Mokwa), who use a rather different technique from that employed by the women.

[286] *Women's weaving* is done on upright looms 21 ins. broad, which may be of Yoruba origin. Among the Basa-Nge, older women weave patterned raffia. Fishing-nets in Kede are made by old men and women from *rama* fibre.[32]

441 *Weapons and tools* include spears, bows and poisoned arrows used by the more remote groups, and knives with blades 8 to 10 ins. long. A few men use flint-locks, and formerly a whole section of the Nupe army was equipped with guns.

501 *Dug-out canoes* are used by the Bataci as well as the Kyedye. Those of the latter are large and square with caulked top strakes. They are mostly obtained from Onitsha and the lower Benue.

534 [643] *Musical instruments* include a central-hole flute (the blow-hole is midway between the ends of the tube), pipes, clarinets (of Hausa origin), various drums and rattles, long bronze trumpets (forming part of the royal insignia), and, in some areas, bull-roarers and animal horns.

532 778 *Gabi figures* are statues of different origins. Two bronze figures stand unprotected in the centre of the village of Jebba Island near a dilapidated hut which is said to have been formerly a temple. There are seven figures at Tada village which are kept in a round hut and carefully tended; some of these are human figures and some animal and they appear to be of diverse origins, but are regarded traditionally as having been left by Tsoede on his flight up the Niger.[33]

[30] Nadel, op cit., pp. 301–3. For an outline of the *bara* system see below p. 35.
[31] Nadel, op cit., pp. 304–8.
[32] Nadel, op cit., pp. 235, 293–7; Hopkins, 1934; Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[33] Temple, 1919, pp. 114, 117, 198, 332; Meek, 1925, vol. I. p. 106; Walker, 1934; see also Palmer, 1931.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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462 The Nupe women have many occupations besides the ordinary household duties. Her obligations as a wife are to prepare the food, and bring firewood and water. They spin, weave, cook little cakes for the market, or practise hair-dressing, a lucrative profession, for a reputed coiffeuse receives 6d. to 1s. a head, according to the elaboration of the dressing, though no client presents herself more than once every moon. There are also women doctors, who attend both male and female patients, and receive the same fees that a man doctor would do. The Nupe women are above all things traders, and will often travel great distances on this behest. On these occasions they are accompanied
463 by their husbands, but the first wife is left at home by right of
439 her position. Usually she prefers so to remain; if she rebels, her husband asks her not to come on account of the loss of dignity, but if she persists he yields. In the early days of her married life, before there are other wives and dependants, she may trade in the neighbourhood three months after her wedding, and when
[542] there are two wives the elder will often take it in turns to go out with the younger. At no time may she leave the compound, however, without her husband's permission.

462 The women do a good deal of out-door work. They collect
542 the produce of all trees, except palm-oil and kola trees, the former
439 of which were a reserve of the Emirs, but are now divided between the occupier and the Chief of the town, and the latter are kept by the men. These they may sell for their own benefit, after first deducting in every case what will be required by the household throughout the year. Women also cultivate and sell ground-nuts and all root-crops, such as ochro, which do not require transplanting. Men do all transplanting and, therefore, own such crops as cassava, sweet potatoes, onions, etc., but it is the women who have the right to sell them, and as they usually keep a commission of 25 per cent. it is a valuable right. If, however, a man finds he is being given unusually high prices he rewards his wife with a liberal gift of cloth. It is the man who tends and owns all grain and, therefore, sells it for himself, but he is thought ill of if he does not first consult his wives as to the price he is to accept for it. They sow the corn and help to garner it after it is reaped, and each woman has charge of so many bundles, as to the sale of which she must be consulted. She expects some small present for her trouble.

566 When a household becomes rich, that is to say when their
556 property, if sold, would realise £20 to £40, a number of people
736 of both sexes ask leave to become their dependants. The master of the house will take no children without the consent of their parents, but a poor man will frequently desire his protection for them. They are then treated as children of the house, they are given food and clothes, and when the time for marriage comes the master of the house provides the necessary money.

Nigeria: Pottery. **Nicholson.**

Bida (Nupe) Pottery. *By W. E. Nicholson.*

These notes refer to one only of the groups of potters in Bida, Niger Province, and the actual workers observed belong to Augi's house in the Quarter of Natsu.

I. *Workers.*—All the operators are women. The family came originally from Sokoto, but the mother of the present potters is said to have learnt the trade from a Yoruba woman, *i.e.*, the technique may be Yoruba or Nupe in origin. All are Mohammedans, so that the survival of tabus, etc., in the craft is not to be expected, and no trace of them was found.

Two varieties of article are made:—

(i) Small water jug, chiefly used for ablutionary purposes, called in Nupe *Musuge* (equivalent to the Hausa *Buta* or *Shantali*—Man, 1929, 34).

(ii) A larger water-container called in Nupe *Dukū-ngetū* (equivalent to the Hausa *Pakunya*—Man 1931, 186).

The following notes refer to the former only of these.

II. *Preparation of the Clay.*—Suitable clay is found in the swamps of the Gbako river at Badeggi, about 10 miles east of Bida. Itinerant vendors from this village bring it round for sale, and it costs about 10d. per cwt. During part of the rainy season floods prevent its collection. The clay is pounded to powder in a wooden mortar identical with that used in the preparation of food. It is levigated—

(i) Usually by the addition of powdered potsherds: this powder is sifted before being added to the clay, through a sieve made of slivers of bamboo.

(ii) Sometimes native bricks of sun-dried mud are burnt and powdered and used instead of potsherds.

After the addition of the levigating material the clay is wetted until it attains the right consistency.

III. *Building of the Pot.*—(*a*) Old cloths are spread on the ground and the operator places in front of herself a flat sand-stone slab about 1 inch thick; it is said that these stones are purchased from the Bead-makers and that they come from further south in Ilorin country; they are 'natural,' *i.e.*, pieces of stratified rock which splits into suitable thicknesses; the slab is well dusted with powdered potsherds to prevent sticking. A ball of clay (*a* (i)) is placed on the slab, manipulated into a 'pancake' (*a* (ii)) and beaten out thin with a stone hand-beater; any